

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0254

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR PFOR MP US XO
SUBJECT: MAURITIAN AMBASSADOR BLANCY'S REPORT ON NEW DIRECTIONS
IN USG FOREIGN POLICY

REF: PORT LOUIS 0231

1. AT MY MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER, SIR HAROLD WALTER,
MARCH 17, HE SHOWED ME A LETTER DATED MARCH 10 WHICH HE HAD
JUST RECEIVED FROM MAURITIAN AMBASSADOR BALANCY IN WASHINGTON.
THE SUBJECT OF THE LETTER WAS "NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE FOREIGN
POLICY OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION."

2. AMBASSADOR BALANCY REPORTED IN HIS LETTER THAT THE NEW
ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN A MAJOR INITIATIVE TO ADVANCE THE
CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. HE NOTED IN THIS
CONNECTION THE ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION TO CUT MILITARY
ASSISTANCE TO ARGENTINA, URUGUAY AND ETHIOPIA AS DEMONSTRATING
THE ADMINISTRATION'S FIRM INTENTIONS IN THIS AREA.

3. AMBASSADOR BALANCY THEN QUOTED A PARAGRAPH FROM THE PRESIDENT'S
MARCH 9 PRESS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCING THE LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS
ON TRAVEL BY US CITIZENS TO NORTH KOREA, VIETNAM, CUBA AND CAMBODIA,
TOGETHER WITH THE RATIONALE FOR THIS CHANGE OF POLICY. BALANCY
COMMENTED THAT THE LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL TO CUBA COULD
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EVENTUALLY LEAD TO RESTORATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE
US AND CUBA, AND IN THE SHORT TERM WOULD PROBABLY LEAD
TO A RESTORATION OF TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, WHICH
COULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT TO CUBA. THE AMBASSADOR
NOTED THAT A LIKELY CONSEQUENCE WOULD BE A LARGE INFLUX
OF AMERICAN TOURISTS TO CUBA, WHICH WOULD HELP THAT COUNTRY
EARN A LARGE AMOUNT OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE.

4. FINALLY, BALANCY STRESSED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD DISCLOSED AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE THAT HE HAD PROPOSED THE COMPLETE DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THE SOVIET UNION. THIS PROPOSAL, THE AMBASSADOR NOTED, WENT CONSIDERABLY BEYOND ANY PREVIOUS DECLARATION WITH REGARD TO DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, SUCH AS THE UN RESOLUTION ON THIS SUBJECT. BALANCY COMMENTED THAT THIS PROPOSAL WAS OBVIOUSLY A SERIOUS ONE, NOT MERELY A "NEGOTIATION TACTIC," AND THE DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE WHICH THE US ATTACHED TO IT COULD BE JUDGED FROM THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S INTENTION TO REDUCE THE US MILITARY BUDGET. THE IMPLICATION OF BALANCY'S COMMENT WAS THAT THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN COULD ASSIST THE US GOVERNMENT TO REDUCE ITS MILITARY EXPENDITURES.

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